

## Editorial

1. This year is the 58th Anniversary of the 1962 Sino-Indian war. The war ended in a defeat for India; a defeat that still evokes emotions, recriminations and painful memories. To commemorate this period and in line with the happenings in Ladakh this year, the articles in this issue have focus on China and the 1962 war.

2. China's insistence on the 'return', to China, of the territory constituting Arunachal Pradesh, and even pushing forward into hitherto quiet areas in Ladakh, is a form of repudiation of the McMahon Line and an attempt to deter what Beijing takes to be potentially threatening behaviour by India. In the Chinese mind, this behaviour could range from supporting an inquiry into the Covid-19 spread and Chinese culpability to India's tilt towards the US and the Quad. In addition, the history of Indian support for unarmed and armed Tibetan resistance to Chinese Communist rule of Tibet and continuation of the Special Frontier Force (SFF) makes Beijing fearful that India might again, someday, work to undermine her rule in Tibet. An open territorial dispute serves as a perennial threat to 'teach India a lesson'. This, in turn, conveys to India that edging into a strategic alignment with the US offers security benefits. The intensity of China's implicit threat can be turned up or down by Beijing depending on the circumstances. Keeping the border issue open dovetails with China's continuing entente with Pakistan and may even be based on an understanding between Beijing and Islamabad.

3. The lead article, titled 'Chairman Mao's Road to War and Salvation in 1962', is by the eminent historian Shri Claude Arpi. Going back into history, he writes about the reasons why Mao Tse went to war with India in 1962. Deeply insightful as always, Claude brings out little known facts as well as known diplomatic duelling of that time, both of which have become opaque in official as well as public memory.

4. The next two articles are 'Déjà vu Standoffs in Eastern Ladakh' by Lt Gen Rajan Bakhshi, PVSM, UYSM (Retd), a former GOC of the Corps which guards Ladakh and 'Ostracising the Ghost of Namka Chu—Defending Kameng' by Lt Gen Anil Ahuja, PVSM,

UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM\*\* (Retd) who has consecutively commanded the Division and Corps guarding Kameng. The first clarifies the events in Ladakh and recommends actions for the future. The second recapitulates, in brief, the operations in Kameng and then suggests a contemporary concept of 'offensive-defence'. They weave past and present events together in Ladakh and the Kameng sector of Arunachal Pradesh.

5. Then are two articles about unsung soldiers of the 1962 war. The first is about Hav Shere Thapa of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles (2 JAK RIF) whose memorial and place of a last stand were marked by the Chinese and now has become a place to visit. The article, titled 'Shere Thapa's Last Stand and Operations in the Upper Subansiri 1962', by Lt Gen AC Soneja, AVSM\*\*, VSM\*\* (Retd), ex CO 2 JAK RIF, is interspersed with the operations in the Upper Subansiri. The second article is by Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), Head Editorial Team, who has commanded 2 Mountain Division. It is about Sep Karam Chand of 4 Dogra. He was just an ordinary soldier. His name is one amongst the 326 names on the Walong war memorial. He was 'missing presumed killed' in the war, and rested in an unmarked grave till his remains were found 48 years later at Walong, during the period of the author's command. His story titled 'With Sepoy Karam Chand at the Battle of Walong' is told in autobiographical fiction style merged with facts of the bitter battle at Walong in the Lohit Valley.

6. The next two articles are about the Indian Air Force in the 1962 war, and the Indian Navy, which remained out of the war because the war remained confined to the land frontier. The first by AVM (Dr) Arjun Subramaniam, AVSM (Retd) is titled 'Non-use of Offensive Air Power in 1962 was a Mistake but Does Not Tell the Whole Story'. He elaborates in detail the folly of not using the offensive strength of the Indian Air Force which could have made a difference. In the second article, titled 'The Indian Navy and PLA Navy in 1962', Cdr Subhasish Sarangi writes about the maritime situation in 1962 in the Indian Ocean Region and brings out the strengths of the Chinese and Indian navies at that time.

7. The next article, by Maj Gen RS Yadav, VSM (Retd), is titled 'De-ciphering Chinese Intent Behind 'Unilateral Decision to Change

Status Quo at LAC' should be the Key to India's Military Response and Follow-up Strategy'. It is about the Chinese intrusions in May 2020 and attempts to deduce the PLA's immediate military aim(s) and intent, and suggests India's military response and follow-up strategy. Thereafter, in the backdrop of the ongoing standoff in Ladakh between India and China, Shri Gaurav Kumar, Assistant Research and Editor at the USI, in his article titled 'India-China Border Agreements' elucidates the important details of various confidence building agreements signed between the two nations towards management of activities at the border and provides the links to these agreements to facilitate further research on the subject by those interested.

8. The penultimate article is a Personal Narrative titled 'My Face-off Moment with the PLA' by Lt Gen Baljit Singh, AVSM, VSM (Retd). He reminisces about a patrol he undertook in the Central sector on the eve of the 1962 war and the nature of standoffs at that time. The last article is not about the 1962 war. It covers an earlier war. The article titled 'Winning a Battle Honour: 1 Sikh LI in Pyawbwe, 1945' by Col Harjeet Singh (Retd) is about how 1 Sikh LI earned the battle honour 'Mandalay' in 1944. The article goes back into the exploits of this sterling battalion to show the steel it is made of and which it can display with clear directions. Unfortunately, in 1962 at Sela, the battalion like others suffered due to confused orders which led to a withdrawal without cohesion and control. The fact that the battalion in comparison to others at Se La came out relatively unscathed with 22 killed and 35 wounded is a testimony to its inherent strength.

9. The issue also carries four short book reviews of the following books:

- Failed States: The Need for a Realistic Transition in Afghanistan  
By Musa Khan Jalalzai  
Reviewed by Maj Gen Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)
- Trials, Tremors and Hope: Political Economy of Contemporary Nepal  
By Ram Saran Mahat  
Reviewed by Dr Geeta Kochhar

- One Mountain Two Tigers: India, China and the High Himalayas  
Ed. Shri Shakti Sinha  
Reviewed by Ms Sharanya Rajiv
- Democracy and Authoritarianism in Pakistan: The Role of The Military and Political Parties  
By Shiraz Sheikh.  
Reviewed by Shri Gaurav Kumar

Wish all readers a reminiscing and educative reading.

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